

EPA Downplays Fears of Nuclear Crisis at West Lake Landfill

Kevin Killeen (@KMOXKilleen)

October 26, 2015 5:17 PM By Kevin Killeen

ST. LOUIS (KMOX) – The regional head of the EPA is in town, downplaying fears of a Chernobyl-like event at the West Lake landfill.

Mark Hague is scheduled to meet with area residents at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Machinists Union Hall on St. Charles Rock Road.

Ahead of the meeting, he told reporters at a downtown news conference that he disagrees with several recent dire predictions about the landfill.

Hague says there is “no imminent ” threat of the underground fire reaching the nuclear material, despite warnings from Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster that the fire could hit the nuclear waste in “three-to-six months.”

And if the fire were to make contact with underground radioactive material, Hague foresees only small amounts of “radon gas” getting out and dissipating – not a “radioactive plume” that St. Louis County disaster planners warned could fall on St. Charles, Bridgeton and Maryland Heights.

“Our data doesn’t support that kind of conclusion, or anything like a Chernobyl or Fukushima,” Hague says. “I think that’s not based upon any science or facts around there.”

Hague says the EPA plans to study ways to stop the underground fire and come up with a plan by the end of 2016. After that, it would take more time to implement the plan, he says.